Women's Fashion: Previewing Fall '79

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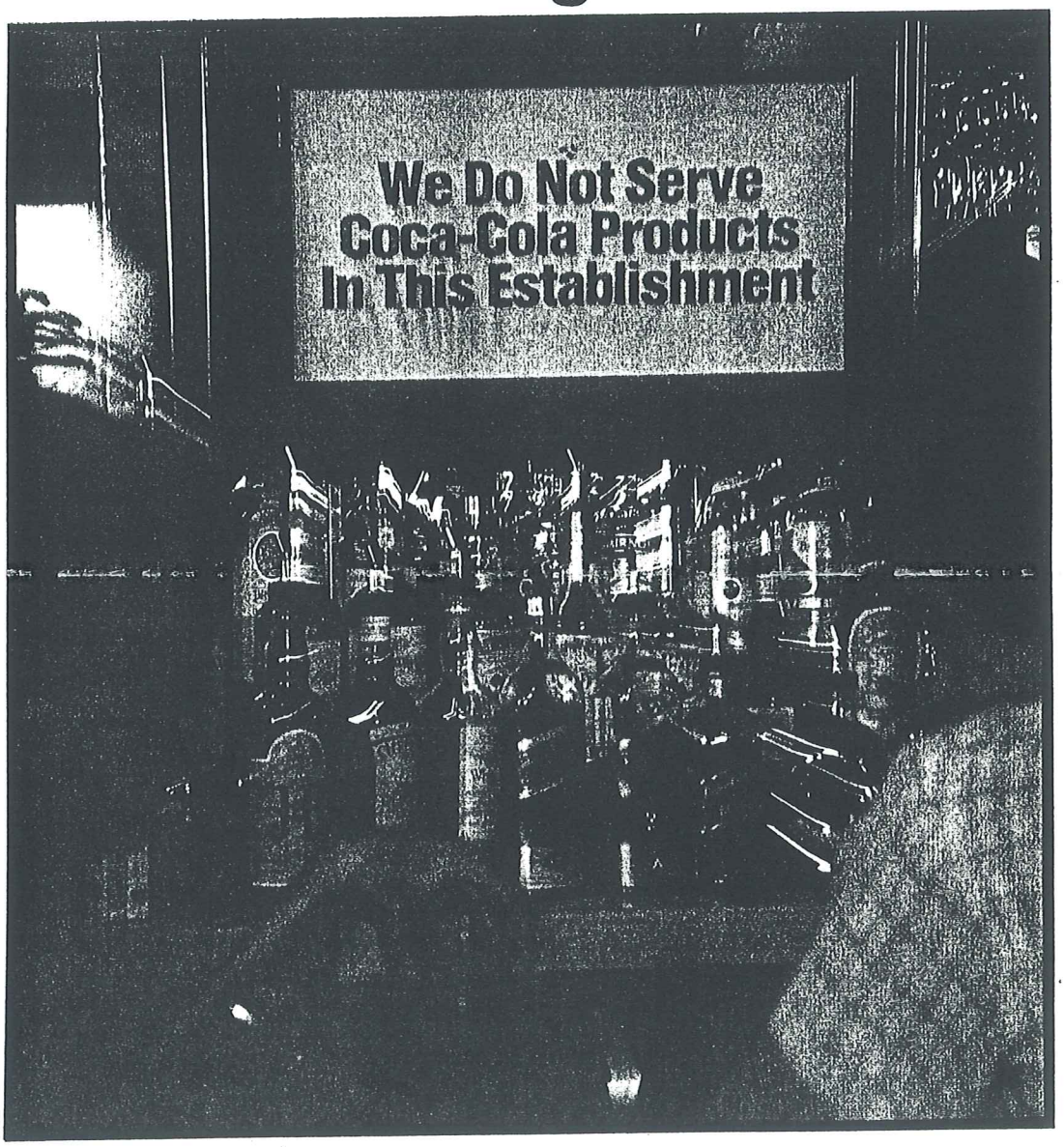
NEW ORLEANS

What's Going On Here?



Jake DiMaggio is a New Orleans businessman and cousin of Joe

city budget, you're not talking about any money, relatively speaking. Whenever a guy gets elected, economics should never be a problem.

New Orleans: Just in the past few years have people begun to hear about Jake DiMaggio. Why is that?

DiMaggio: I don't know. I haven't done anything different. I think, more or less, maybe I was a little bit ahead of my time. I've said time and time again that the banking community in this city is horrendous. I myself have gone down to banks at times, trying to collateralize a loan for something that I thought would be good for me and good for the city and hire a lot of people. I think it would be a great plank in the governor's platform that any billion dollar bank that wanted to come to Louisiana, anyone, I don't care if they are a Japanese bank, a German bank, a New York bank or whoever they are—let them in, let them in. Provided that they buy or associate with an existing Louisiana small bank, you understand, and come on in. I think if the banking community was faced with competition—now, there is none—then we would be in a position to move. I think I can sum up my philosophy of what's happening in the country through one of my living heroes right now, and I have a few, but Eric Hoffer, the great philosopher, self-taught longshoreman, tells a story which I think sums up what's going on in the country today. He was on his way to teach his class at University of California at Berkeley. Everyone had politely gotten in line to catch the bus and this rather gruff person came and jumped to the head of the line and just got in. Hoffer, being the man that he is, very robust although he's in his eighties, yelled, 'Hey, you get to the back of the line where you belong.' Everybody turned around and shooed him, saying, 'Don't rock the boat. Don't start any trouble. That's alright, we don't mind.' That's not what built this country. We are letting less than four million people in these Arab countries ruin the economy of the world. Where is it written that we should not say, look straighten out or we're going to declare war? Russia's gonna come in and say something? This one's gonna come in? We're gonna let these Arab countries ruin our entire economy? You're gonna tell me again that that's not a conspiracy? We're gonna take and sit back and let South American countries continue to produce and import into the United States illegally all of the dope? All of the narcotics? You're gonna tell me that that is being done without some sort of conspiracy? I just think that people are more concerned about whether or not councilman so-and-so used an automobile unauthorized, or this or that. We tell it like it is on television? Bull. We tell it like it is on radio? Bull. How are we allowing the whole economy of the United States and the world to be ruined by the Arab countries? Of course, let's pay them a fair price. We can even take economic means. They have to buy food, so if they're gonna charge this much for gas we charge them this much for wheat or for any services that we want.

'I think more or less I was maybe a little ahead of my time.'

New Orleans: Do you think there is a prejudice against Italians and Sicilians here in the city?

DiMaggio: Absolutely.

New Orleans: Do you think that prejudice is historical?

DiMaggio: Why does anybody hate? I think most people hate out of fear. Let me touch on the Mafia. To me it's a joke. If you subscribe that there is a Mafia, you must then state that the following is true: That there is a group of Sicilian men, all in their 70's and 80's, most who cannot read or write, which includes Carlos Marcello. I'm sure, Carlos Marcello, whom I've never met in my life, that he must laugh his head off at the press. Now these men must know economics, they must know everything that there is to know, but they must also be so smart that they have outwitted J. Edgar Hoover, in his lifetime, and all of the facilities of the F.B.I. They are so smart that they have outwitted the C.I.A. and even now we find instances where the C.I.A. says that they know about them and they hire them. Now, that's the ludicrousy *(sic)* of ludicrousies—that the C.I.A. can't perform an assassination so they know where the Mafia is, they go out and hire the Mafia. That's written in the paper and it's said on television with a straight face. That must be the good Mafia. They're different from the bad Mafia. Then, after that, they've outwitted the C.I.A., the Secret Service, every intelligence division of the Justice Department, the Congress of the United States, the President of the United States, every intelligence division of every state police agency, every city police agency and so forth. Now I want to tell you something. I don't believe in crime because I believe there are so many ways to make money the right way. If I was dishonest in any way, I would have been behind bars so long ago it wouldn't have been funny. Because I've taken on everything from police chiefs, mayors, governors, it doesn't make any difference. I say, 'There is no Mafia.' Now, is there organized crime? Absolutely, absolutely. Is it a crime for a homestead, for instance, to say in order to get this loan you have got to pay us two points, five points, over the table in order to get the loan. That's legal? Of course, it's legal because they went and got it legalized. That's a crime. So I say to you, if there was an organization like that, I want to join it. I want to be with them. I mean put up my name and address and say Jake DiMaggio hereby applies for membership in your club. I want to be with you guys. Let's just take Carlos Marcello, and I know the headline will read—'DiMaggio defends Marcello,' but I mean the man, I understand, has something like a third-grade education, and if he was doing everything that he did, he has to work 60 hours a day, and the last I heard there were only 24 in a day. You've got the I.R.S. to come at you, you've got this to come at you, you've got that to come at you . . . come on, come on. And the lunacy of lunacies is that the C.I.A. hires the Mafia to do their assassinations for them. ♣